

Housing

Mr. Crosby: Have you been to Scarborough lately?

Mr. Manly: I believe that a housing policy must avoid the sterility of mass uniformity in urban areas.

Mr. Crosby: That is it; that is Scarborough.

Mr. Manly: You can mention some of your suburbs in Ontario. I can think of similar areas in British Columbia which can be greatly improved upon. Different regions can afford different housing styles.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, there is a need when planning our housing to take into consideration the social aspects of our society. Our houses must not be planned as a series of isolated dwelling units but must take into consideration other policies of the government such as energy, transportation, daycare, education, recreation and culture. It must consider the changing patterns of family life, employment and age.

It is within that framework of a complete housing policy that I would like to point out some of the problems regarding Indian and native housing. The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has delegated some of its responsibility for Indian housing to CMHC. However, CMHC has not been very helpful to the Indian people in meeting their problems. There is the danger in considering the problem of native housing that we might ignore the fact that some Indian people have built very nice homes for themselves in which they take a great deal of pride. When we make reference to the fact that Indian housing is a national disgrace, we do not mean that all Indian homes are shacks. That implication would be grossly unfair to the Indian people. Many homes on Indian reserves are spacious and others are modest but attractive and well maintained. It is also a fact that too many Indian homes are inadequate because of poor heating, poor ventilation, inadequate sanitation and safety facilities.

A survey put out by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development on Indian conditions in 1980 detailed the major health problems encountered by Indians. The survey said:

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The major causes of Indian deaths and illnesses appear to be associated with poor housing and living conditions and a rural life style.

In a report on Indian health, Mr. Justice Tom Berger makes the same point. He says:

So many of the causes of Indian ill health lie beyond the fact of illness itself... Indians are usually poor. Their homes are crowded. One third, at least, of their houses are unfit for human habitation. There is a lack of clean water, and inadequate sewage and garbage disposal. The prevalence of respiratory illness among Indians is, of course, aggravated by the absence of central heating in a cold country.

During a survey of housing on a reserve near my constituency two years ago houses with four and five bedrooms and 16 and 18 people crowded into them were still found. In 1977 across Canada 14.8 per cent of all Indian homes housed two families; another 4 per cent housed three or more families. This is the kind of crowding conditions in which Indian people have had to live. Fewer than 50 per cent of all Indian homes

across Canada have water or sewage hookups. In 1975 fewer than 35 per cent of Indian reserves had adequate fire protection. This, combined with overcrowding and inadequate heating, explains why Indian people have had a death rate resulting from house fires seven times that of non-Indians.

There is a backlog of some 11,000 homes to be built and another 11,000 homes which need to be renovated and brought up to date. At present there is supposed to be a major review of Indian housing by the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and CMHC. We are still waiting for it, and the two departments seem to have a great deal of difficulty getting together and coming up with some proposal which, in consultation with the Indian people, will be acceptable.

The use of CMHC funds is helpful on some reserves, but on many others it is not of very much help. It creates all kinds of additional problems for the Indian people. For example, there is the difficulty of making payments when people have a welfare-type economy. When these housing programs no longer have any labour component we really do not have good Indian housing policy at all.

A discussion paper put out on October 28, 1981, by the department talks about some of the problems. It says:

In order to access housing effectively, bands must go to DIAND, CMHC, in some cases the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission (CEIC), approved lenders, their own resources, etc. Even when bands seek funds from all these sources, they are often not able to raise the full amount needed for their housing.

Almost invariably these labour funds come on stream at the wrong time of year for house construction on Indian reserves. Worse still, bands often do not know whether programs funded in one year will even be available at all the following year. For example, labour funds in support of house construction on Indian reserves in 1977 were made available through CEIC's Canada Works Program. Then through their Local Employment Assistance Program (LEAP) and laterally through their Canada Community Development Projects (CCDP). This last program for 1981-82 was not announced until the end of the summer for implementation in October. Bands could not plan for it but will try to take up as much money from this program as they can, despite its coming on stream at the wrong time of the year—

The Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development has recognized the backlog of 11,000 homes which need to be built, but is not able to come up with programs which will meet that backlog. The 1980-81 report of the department points out the following:

The on-reserve housing target remained the same in 1980-81 as they were for 1979-80: 2,400 new houses and 3,000 renovations to existing structures... There remains a shortage of approximately 11,000 housing units on reserve and a backlog again of 11,000 units in need of repairs.

The on-reserve housing backlog increased steadily from 1963 to 1971. From 1971 onwards, the backlog has remained relatively stable due to the fact that the target of 2,400 new housing units remains sufficient to satisfy current demand in terms of accommodating new families—

In other words, the department is just barely able to keep up with the growing population. It is not doing anything about the continuing problems of overcrowding mentioned earlier.

When we look at the situation of off-reserve Indians, we find it to be similarly desperate. If we look at our small towns across Canada, often we will find across the river or on the other side of the railroad tracks small communities derisively